Pulpit Preaching

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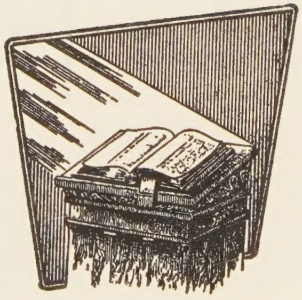

EDITORIAL COMMENTS

This month's themes are "Easter: Day of Hope" (containing also one Palm Sunday message) and "The Christian View of Death" (with sermons embracing also an Easter emphasis). The April themes will be "The Church and Youth" and "Christian Families." The May topics will be "Echoes from the Old Testament" and "The Church's One Foundation."

National Library Week, April 3-9, would offer an appropriate opportunity to express and engender an appreciation for the varied ministries of the Books and books in the evangelical mission of the Church. Even as the saddlebags of the circuit-riders long ago were crowded full of books, so today our ministry is undergirded with the written word which illuminates and inspires. Christian books are among the best products of the twentieth-century mind.

BOOKS FOR PULPIT PREACHING

A Journey through the Old Testament by M. A. Beek of the University of Amsterdam is a fascinating book which gives to the personalities, situations, and dominant spiritual themes of the Old Testament a living vitality which is as rare as it is engaging. In its balance between distinguished scholarship and appealing writing, this book's seventy-three chapters should lead many readers to a new study-in-depth of the Bible. Although written especially for laymen, pastors and other church workers will find it to be an asset for both background study and for in-

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WORTH QUOTING

E. Paul Hovey
The Federated Churches
Lewiston, Idaho

A pointed and powerful sentence from II Kings crowds my mind. Here are the words: "Let us go unto Jordan . . . and take thence every man a beam.'

"Every man a beam" conjures up what seems to me the perfect image of concerted movement in a great enterprise. It shouts co-operation. There are times when leaders must be subordinate . . . There are vital moments when the total organization must surge forward . . .

Thence . . . Here is the word that suggests progress, movement toward a goal . . . What we have done dwindles when it is measured against the ideal. Thence is our ideal. It's where we are going that counts most, not where we have been. So the word suggests that we are on the move. We are not standing still.

We are urged . . . to carry beams. Not two-by-fours or kindling. There is building to be done. We want to put up a better tabernacle, a more functional edifice, and it will take beams to do it . . . beams are big. In carrying them there is struggle and effort. True, we carry good tidings when we call on all our neighbors, but we also carry the burden of a great message—one not to be delivered carelessly.

Karla V. Parker

* * *

What is there in our lives to indicate to the world that we belong

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Pulpit Preaching

Editors
CHARLES L. WALLIS
Keuka College Church
Keuka Park, N. Y.
CHARLES L. ALLEN
Grace Methodist Church
Atlanta, Georgia
E. PAUL HOVEY
The Federated Church
Lewiston, Idaho

Address sermon manuscripts and editorial correspondence to Rev. C. L. Wallis, Keuka College, Keuka Park, New York. Receipt will be acknowledged.

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RALPH W. SOCKMAN

J. B. BROKHOFF

WESLEY P. FORD

GENE E. BARTLETT

EASTER: DAY OF HOPE

THE KING WHO SERVES

Ralph W. Sockman, Christ Church, New York, New York

On Palm Sunday we commemorate the coming of Christ to Jerusalem as King. Some years ago I sat on the Mount of Olives and pictured to myself other rulers who had moved through the gates of Jerusalem. I thought of King David's heroic figure as he fought for his beloved city and dreamed the design of its temple. I recalled King Solomon and the splendors of his reign which have stirred Jewish hearts ever since. I remembered the crusaders who almost a thousand years ago marched across Europe to rescue the Holy Sepulchre from the medieval Moslems. Then some fifty years ago a break was made in the walls of Jerusalem to permit the entrance of the proud German Kaiser Wilhelm. World War I saw General Allenby and his British Army receiving the keys of the Holy City. But the military and political rulers who rode into Jerusalem have stopped riding. No crowds gather today to re-enact the parades of King David or King Solomon or the Crusading European Kings.

Yet the little company which hailed Jesus as King on the first Palm Sunday has grown until now more than six hundred million bow their heads to honor him. What has caused this amazing multiplication of Christ's followers? Do you say that it is the efficiency of the organized church which has perpetuated his memory? Speaking as one who knows something of the church both in the local parish and on the world scale, I cannot believe that the church has kept the spirit of Christ alive. Far truer would it be to say that Christ has kept the church alive. I have heard business men say that if they ran their business as loosely as some churches manage their finances, they would go bankrupt. Yet the church somehow survives when depressions cause business firms to fail. The church, despite the frequent mismanagements of its properties, the frailty of its ministers and the faults of its members, has outlasted the banks and governments of the world. The only way I can explain the survival and spread of the Christian Church is that it is sustained by divine power.

I

Something there is about the Kingship of Christ which outlives other rulers. And what is it? May it not be this, that Christ is the King who serves? He said: "You know that those who are supposed to rule over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you: but whoever would be great among you must be your servant. For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve."

On the day of his triumphal entry, when he apparently wished to impress the public with his royal authority, Jesus chose to ride on a lowly ass, a beast of burden. It was a vivid reminder that the "Son of man came not to be served but to serve."

This Christ-like principle of seeking rule in order to serve was so

revolutionary that the contemporaries of Jesus did not comprehend it. At the height of his popularity, some of his patriotic countrymen offered Jesus a crown. They would have rallied behind him in a revolution to throw off the yoke of the Roman Empire. But Jesus refused the offer and the patriots were puzzled. When Jesus stood before Pilate and the Roman governor asked him if he were really a King, Jesus replied that if his kingdom were of this world then would his followers fight. Pilate was bewildered and no doubt thought Jesus was addled.

And think how Judas misunderstood Jesus. Judas was treasurer of Christ's little company of disciples. Perhaps he expected to control the exchequer in the new kingdom Christ was to set up. When Jesus refused to lead a military or political revolt against the Roman government, Judas was either disillusioned by Jesus' seeming lack of power or else he thought he could force Jesus to display his power by having him arrested. In any case, Jesus was betrayed and crucified because he was not the kind of king the people of his day expected.

And after nineteen centuries Jesus' principle of ruling in order to serve is still hard for many to comprehend and accept. We have advanced to the point in free nations like Canada and the United States where candidates for public office must profess that their desire is to serve the public good. No person could be elected if he brazenly stated that his desire for office was in order to secure power and profit. But while there are many who honestly do seek positions of power in order to serve the people, the cynical public commonly assumes that men want political and financial power for the sake of what they can get for themselves rather than for what they can give to others.

Similarly, when nations seek to extend their rule over other countries, men take it for granted that the motive is selfish. When the Soviet Union asserts that its desire is to serve and improve its satellite states, the free world laughs in disbelief. And when America extends its economic relief, the communist countries insist that our motive is selfish.

Thus the issue which divides the world into two threatening camps is the issue raised by Jesus and brought to focus on that first Palm Sunday. The worldly mind declares that men seek rule in order to secure service form others: Jesus said "the Son of man came not to be served but to serve."

II

Let us look further into this claim that Christ is the King who serves. The testimony of his gospel biographers is that "to all who received him, to them gave he power to become children of God." Other rulers have made men their subjects; Christ makes his subjects into masters. He was a team player, yoking himself with his followers, imparting to them the strength which was in himself. He teamed up with Simon, the big fisherman of turbulent temper who could not control his own cowardice, and transformed him into Peter, the master of his passions and the brave spokesman for his fellow-disciples. One day at the well of Sychar Jesus met a Samaritan woman whose tawdry private life had closed the doors of decent society against her and he imparted to her sullen and hopeless spirit a new lease on life. They brought to him a poor broken woman taken in the sin that called for stoning, and he restored her purity and gave her back her self-respect. Jesus passed the seat of custom where sat Levi a tax-collector, greedily serving the Roman government by taking taxes from the grinding poverty of his countrymen, and the Master so affected the despised publican that ere long Levi was following him and he became redeemed into Saint Matthew. Thus Jesus moved among men, lifting them from

enslavement to their weaknesses and making them "kings and priests unto God," as a later writer wrote.

Watch a little further how Christ works. Jesus was master of himself. He always had himself under control. He was tempted in all points even as we are, yet without sin. And that power over the inner self Christ still imparts. When men are torn by the tension between their lower and higher natures, when they feel, as Saint Paul did, that the good they would do not and the evil they would not they do — when such is their condition, Christ gives them power to be masters of themselves. Jesus was master of human relationships. When the public flattered him, he did not lose his head. When the crowd jeered and cursed, he did not lose his nerve. He never gave way to bitterness under the bludgeoning of his critics, nor to revenge when the opposition weakened. And this mastery of social situations Christ has imparted to men like Saint Francis of Assisi who kept loving when others hated, to men like Luther who held to his convictions saying, "Here I stand, I can do no other." In Christ oppressed and harassed men today are finding strength to keep head and heart when others are losing theirs and blaming it on them.

Jesus was master of material conditions. He was poor, yet he never gave the impression of being poverty-stricken. His sources of satisfaction seemed so independent of money. He had such an air of opulent joyous being that a rich young man once came to him asking his secret. And today I could name scores of friends who have found through Christ what Paul found when he could say: "I know how to be abased and I know how to abound; in any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and want."

Moreover, Jesus was master of pain. As a physician he sought to banish all needless pain. But when it came he stood up to it. He prayed in Gethsemane that the cup of suffering might pass from him, but when he saw that it was his Father's will, he drank it with the gallant courage of a true sportsman. He endured the indescribable pain of the cross without becoming bitter toward those who inflicted it, saying on the cross, "Father forgive them for they know not what they do." And this mastery of pain Christ is still imparting, as I have seen this very week in brave sufferers whose endurance is an inspiration to all who know them.

III

And the supreme test of Jesus' ruling power was his m a s t e r y of death. I refer at the moment not to the victorious way he emerged from the grave—of that we speak on Easter —but to the serene way he walked toward it. Jesus knew he was about to die. I have sometimes wondered what I should do if I knew that I had but six months to live. Would I try to forget the fact in extravagant indulgence? Or would I grow morbid about my approaching death, either talking too much about it or assuming a mock heroism toward it? Well, Jesus did none of these things. He walked toward his death with such serenity that his closest friends could not believe that he was going to die. And when at last he was nailed to the cross and he was hanging in agony, there was still something so majestic and royal about him that a dying thief beside him turned to Jesus and said, "Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom."

And the Christ, who was the master of death and the fear of it, has become the living Savior who like a shepherd leads his faithful f l o c k through the valley of the shadow of death where they fear no evil because he is with them. He has kept his followers "steadfast, u n m o v a b l e, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as they know that their labor is not in vain in the Lord."

In the summer of 1946 I was sent

on a mission to Russia. There I saw the picture of Stalin everywhere; in almost every shop, in every park, in giant banners draped on the sides of buildings. Now only a few years later a delegation of American churchmen visiting the Soviet Union report that the reminders of Stalin are being rapidly removed. The dictator who overreaches himself is soon overriden. When power is used to dominate, it makes the subject restless and they plot its destruction. But when power is used to serve, it holds the hearts of those served. That is why "the Son of man who came not to be served but to serve" outlasts the Caesars and the Stalins.

Ibsen based one of his plays on the life of the Emperor Julian, who in the fourth century persecuted the Christians and tried to re-establish the mythical gods of Greece and Rome. But he could not dethrone the Christ from the minds and hearts of the growing Christian community. Finally he is compelled to say: "What does the conqueror win? Is it worth while to conquer? What has the Macedonian Alexander, what has Julius Caesar won? Greeks and Romans talk of their renown with cold admiration, while the other, the Galilean, the Carpenter's son, sits enthroned as the King of love in the warm believing hearts of men."

Yes, when the captors and the conquerors depart, Christ still holds the hearts of men because he is the King who serves.

LOOK AT HIM NOW!

J. R. Brokhoff, St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Charlotte, North Carolina

> See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me, and see; for a spirit has not flesh and bones as you see that I have. Luke 24:39

Some time ago a news report came out of Jugoslavia about a man standing in his bathtub and touching an electric cord. He was shocked into unconsciousness. A doctor pronounced him dead. He was buried in a crypt under the cemetery's chapel. In due time he regained consciousness, pushed open his casket, and tried to open the iron gate of the crypt. He found it locked and called to the caretaker to open it. The caretaker became scared and ran off. Later he took hold of himself and opened the gate for the man. Then the man called his wife, but upon hearing his voice she dropped the phone and collapsed. He went to the homes of two friends but in each case they, thinking he was a ghost, slammed the door in his face. Finally he found a friend who had not heard of his death and had him act as intermediary to assure his family and friends that he truly was alive.

On Easter day Jesus had a similar experience. Thinking he was a ghost, they were frightened. The angel had to say to the women: "Fear not. He is risen. He is not here." Jesus told his disciples that they should not be affrighted. To prove that he was real, he urged them to look at his hands and feet. To prove to Thomas that he was really alive, he had the doubting disciple put his finger into the wounds. Jesus urged the disciples to touch and handle him to prove that he was not a ghost. Jesus had to prove that he was the same person. The Jesus of the cross was the Jesus of the resurrection. The Jesus of history is the same Jesus of faith. The nail prints are the connecting link between the cross and the open tomb.

I

We would do well to take another look at Jesus. We see now the resurrected Lord, but we also see that he is the same person who walked on the roads of Palestine and died in Jerusalem. Our first look shows us

hat the body of the resurrected Jesus ıad the same marks and characteris-ics as the Jesus of Nazareth. This ame body hung on the cross. The cars on his hands, feet, and side ›rove that. This was the one who lied on Good Friday. He is not a ghost or a vision. The resurrection vas not a hallucination on the part f those who came to the empty tomb. He was really, physically alive.

For us this has significance. It eaches, for one thing, that Jesus is ıot a dead being but a living reality. We are often guilty of referring to esus as though he were some person vho lived long ago. We talk about im as though he were a man out f the pages of history. We refer to im as a great man of the past, like Paul or Peter or Luther or Alex-nder or Plato. The truth is that esus is very much alive now. He s not only a historical character of he past, but an eternal contemporary. He lives now in our midst and in our imes. We should therefore refer to im as living in the here and now. We should pray to him as a close ›ersonal friend. We should speak of im as One who is looking over our houlders.

Jesus' sameness in body answers or us a question which is frequently sked: "Shall we know each other in eaven?" What is the nature of the esurrection body? Jesus had the first esurrection body, and we shall have body like his. It was a body with he characteristics of a physical body. He could ask his friends to touch and andle him. He talked with them and te with them. For 40 days he walked n earth as a resurrected Lord. His ody had the characteristics of his arthly body. The nail prints were ie give-away. By them the disciples new it was indeed the Lord. At the ame time Jesus' resurrected body vas immaterial, spiritual, and glori-ed. With this body he could enter ıto a room when doors and windows vere shut. He could be two places t one time: in Jerusalem and walk-ing with two men on the road to Emmaus. We do not understand how that could be. The resurrection body is a mystery.

Yet we do get the answer to the question of whether or not we shall know each other in heaven. If we have a body like the resurrected Christ, we shall have the physical characteristics of our bodies. By these marks we shall recognize each other. Yet these bodies will not be physical, for "flesh and blood doth not inherit the kingdom of God". They will be spiritual, glorified bodies with earthly characteristics by which we shall know and be known.

II

Look at him now! A second look shows us that the resurrected Christ is the same one who spoke on Good Friday. The One speaking now spoke in the same way and the same things as before the resurrection. The resurrected Christ is not a new being with a new message. At first Mary Magdalene thought the risen Lord was the gardener. When he said "Mary," she understood at once that it was Jesus. It must have been the tone of voice, and the way he said it that made her realize who he was.

The Jesus speaking on Easter day is the same one speaking before Easter. Time after time he told the disciples that he would rise on the third day. The disciples never took his words seriously. Now they remembered that he said he would. This is most important, for if Jesus had not fulfilled his words, history would have called him a liar and an impostor. The whole structure of Christianity is based upon his resurrection. If Jesus had not been true to his word of promise, there would be no victory in Easter. The important thing is that his word is true and can be counted on. He proved the truth of his own words.

This helps us to take as truth other things that Jesus said before Easter. If Jesus was right about his resurrection, he is certainly right about

lesser things. Who, for instance, did Jesus say he was? Is Jesus only a prophet? A teacher? A good man? Now we remember he said, "The Father and I are one." There it is! There is the truth of Jesus' nature. He and God are one. He is the divine Son of God, the Saviour, and long-promised Messiah.

And how do we get to the Father? Do you say that all religions are good and that all we need to be is religious? Jesus said, "No man cometh unto the Father but by me." There is the word of truth! According to this, there is only one true religion, the religion of Jesus Christ. If no one can get to the Father except by Jesus, then we must accept Christ as our Mediator and Advocate.

How is a man to be saved? By knowledge? By his own character? Listen to Jesus: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." It is simple, but true. They who have believed and been baptized have the confidence that they are saved by the grace of God. They are children of God and members of His eternal kingdom.

Is there life after death? For ages there was only a hope. Is it not a fact? Jesus said: "In my Father's house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you." Here again Jesus bases the r e a l i t y of heaven upon his words: "If it were not so, I would have told you." These words can be trusted, because Jesus fulfilled his promise to rise on the third day. When we die in Christ, shall we go to heaven? The answer is "Yes." Are our loved ones who died in the faith in heaven now? The answer is again "Yes." This means comfort and hope to those who mourn for their loved ones.

III

Take a look at him now! A third glance shows that this resurrected Christ is the same one who met defeat on the cross. From the world's viewpoint, the cross was a defeat. There was a miscarriage of justice. Love dissolved. Truth was put on the scaffold. Life met death. The whole spectacle on Good Friday was one of gloom and defeat. But look at him now! This same defeated Jesus defeats! He is alive and thus defeated death. He rose above hatred and enmity. Where are his enemies now? He vindicated truth. Love was triumphant. Satan and his f o r c e s were scattered.

For Christians this is good news. It means that we in Christ shall also win with Christ. Of course, this does not mean that we shall always have success. The sun shall not always shine. We shall meet temporary defeat, just as Jesus did on Good Friday. There are times when the forces of evil get the better of the good powers. The good man does suffer. The church must at times go underground. Evil for a time does have its way. Innocent people lose their lives.

Christians sometimes wonder why they have bad luck when they see others who have no faith get all the breaks in life. They cannot understand it. They reason in this manner: We believe in God, we have been faithful through the years, and we have tried to do our part in the church. But look at the unbelievers. They never go to church. They swear and curse. They use shady methods in business dealings. Yet they get all the breaks and go places. Why is this the case? Our answer would be that Christians do h a v e temporary setbacks. Jesus had them too. But there is always the third day. Victory is on the way!

The word "defeat" is not in the Christian's vocabulary. Christians have sorrows, but not defeat. They have troubles, but not defeat. Suffering and hardships, but not defeat. Why? Because Christians have the invincible spirit of Christ. By that spirit they mount up as with wings above the troubles and trials of the world. With Paul, Christians say, "We are more than conquerors through him that loved us." Another writer

says, "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." On Easter day we are once more assured that truth and love and justice and life will ultimately prevail. We can live each day with a sense of radiance and victory.

IV

Look at him now! A fourth view shows us that the resurrected Lord is the same person who died on the cross. The scars of the Savior are proof of it. And he really did die, too! It was not, as some say, that Jesus as God could never die, that he only seemed to die by swooning until the third day. When they cut his side, there flowed blood and water. This could not have happened unless the body was truly dead for some time. He died of a ruptured heart. His body was a cold and stiff corpse. He was as dead as any one can ever be.

Now this dead body is alive. It is warm and quick. It is lovely and lovable. He once more walks and talks and speaks. He is full of life, more so now than ever. The wonderful news of Easter has brought hope and comfort to millions through the ages.

For us this fact has tremendous significance. It takes the question of a future life out of the realm of hope and makes it a reality. The fact of the resurrection changes our entire attitude about death. Without Easter we loathe and fear death. It is a subject to be avoided. The resurrection also changes our understanding of the nature of death. Death now is not a graduation from life as though life were all over. Rather it is a promotion to a fuller, greater life with Christ. It means more life, more joy, more peace.

Because Christ rose from the dead, death becomes an adventure in greater living. St. Paul said: "For me to live is Christ and to die is gain." When death approaches, we can welcome it as J. S. Bach did: "Come, sweet death, come holy rest."

We have been looking at the risen Lord. Now look at you! Are you any different because of the Easter Fact? On which side of Easter are you now living? Is your mind filled with doubt and fear? Then you are living on the Good Friday side of life. Is your heart filled with hatred and resentment? Then you have not risen with Christ. Are you so selfish that you have no love or concern for anyone other than yourself? Then Easter has never come to your life. Let the Easter light and life and glory come into your life. Then you too will have a resurrected life. As someone has said, the final proof of the Resurrection is the resurrection of His followers. Let the world know that Christ is risen by bearing in your life the resurrected Christ. If you will, Easter can mean for you life and love and hope.

HE IS HERE! FOR HE IS RISEN!

Wesley P. Ford, Central Christian Church, Pasadena, California

Several have pointed out what they believed to be an error in this title. I am glad for their acquaintance with the scriptural text but I have chosen not to quote the text. According to Matthew, an angel met the women who came to the tomb and said: "Do not be afraid, I know that you seek Jesus. He is not here, for he is risen." That report, he is not here, referring only to the tomb, has hailed Easter morn through the years. But we do not spend our lives in tombs where he is not. Rather we spend our days in the grand fellowship of men where he is. Christ arose! He is here! For he is risen!

The details of the gospel reports of this event are not identical. Its stupendous nature was beyond the

reach of reporters, but details are incidental. The fact of the resurrection is literally plowed into history. It is the great divide. The calendar, which is fixed by this experience, is but one of its influences. More important than the fact of the first reports is the evidence of the centuries.

I

One undeniable evidence of the resurrection is the faith of the Christians. Peter, who had been weak, now became strong. He and others embraced the resurrection and found not only a new direction but a new power. Stephen was the first in a glorious company of martyrs for the new faith. Men do not die for a myth. It is true that some have been misguided and have given their lives for wrong or lost causes. Hitler's devotees are an example. But history soon r e v e a l s their error. Rather than fading into oblivion, as lost causes do, the followers of Christ have crossed continents and oceans to unfurl the banner of love and to perform works of mercy.

The apostles would not obey the council's order to be silent about this new faith. Christians insisted on bearing witness to the fact that God had exalted Jesus Christ whom men had crucified. When officers were counselling about how to stop this hersey Gamaliel intervened to say, "If this plan is of men it will fail, but if it is of God you will not be able to overthrow them." He pointed out how other leaders had gathered little groups for a time only to fall by the wayside. But in spite of Gamaliel's counsel there was an organized effort to put this Christian group out of business. When prison would not silence them, they were put to death. But on they marched, out into two thousand years of glorious history, outloving, outliving, outdying, and so outlasting the empire or the army that would silence them. This is the evidence of the resurrection! This morning's millions finding their way to Christian churches throughout the world because it is Easter add testimony to support the fact.

A visitor seeing the Grand Canyon for the first time, standing in awe before its depth and spaciousness remarked, "Something must have happened here!" That was the conclusion of logic. And the same logic belongs to Easter. To see the result is to know there was cause.

The resurrection reached out in two directions both of which are vital for us. Here was a new fact about death and a new fact about life. The letter to Timothy r e f e r s to Jesus Christ who "abolished d e a t h and brought life and immortality to light." Life's meaning and the fact of immortality were brought to light in the one event. The resurrection occurred on both sides of the grave. Here is good news before and after death. He is here, for he is risen! says of death that its end is not a tomb and it says of life that death is not its end.

The resurrection did not establish the hope of everlasting life. That hope has always been in human conscience. The resurrection confirmed the hope of the centuries! When his followers realized that it was not possible for Jesus to be held by death, they became convinced that death was for them not a blind alley but an adventure.

A fundamental fact here is that when one changes his opinion about death something happens to his life. When Christ's followers lost their fear of death, they shook the foundations of empire. They were small in number but mighty in power. Beaten and persecuted they sang. "Do with our bodies as you will, death is not a tomb, it is life's higher chapter." "The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be."

After the resurrection the followers of Christ were no longer limited to one world. They had all of this and heaven too. They could suffer

for righteousness' sake believing that, if death was their lot, beyond death was glorious adventure. Whatever one may believe about the nature of death, freedom from fear of death gives life a new dimension of beauty and power. The most dreadful and trying problems lose their grip when one grasps the faith of the resurrection. Death is not a tomb; it is an adventure! Death leaves loved ones lonely but the voyager is not alone; he is here for he is risen.

II

The resurrection brought immortality into focus until men were convinced that death did not end in a tomb. And as this experience removed the fear of death it brought a new quality to life. This is a second contribution of the resurrection. If life is forever, then motives, attitudes and conduct assume a new importance. Immortality is a matter of quality as well as time, and the quality begins now. "This is life eternal, to know God."

In the light of the resurrection neither death nor immortality is limited to a single physical event. Life is more than body and each of us is in a constant struggle with the forces that would destroy the fruits of the spirit. The fact of immortality provides the motive for the daily conquest of sin. And the risen Christ has become the great ally in our constant struggle to win every day for truth and goodness.

III

The voice that announced the risen Christ said, "He is going before you into Galilee." Whatever may be one's understanding of the nature of the immediate post—resurrection appearances one fact is undeniable, Jesus has continued to appear before human lives with transforming power. The legacy which Jesus Christ left includes more than his teachings, more than a philosophy of life. It is a way of life. It is a way of life and a personal companionship that provides power to walk that way. Here is a third resurrection fact: power to do the good we know we ought to do. Saul, going to Damascus, was still doing battle against the Christians, when he heard a voice which changed his life. "Who are you?" he asked and the voice said, "I am Jesus." The voice that beckoned Saul has been calling out men's better natures through the centuries since.

A hundred years ago John Paton was a missionary to the New Hebrides, islands that still knew cannibalism. In his autobiography he speaks of a native, Abraham, who became a Christian and his trusted helper. "That noble soul," he writes, "stood by me as an angel of God in sickness and in danger. That man had been a cannibal but, by the grace of God, there he stood a new creature in Christ Jesus. Any trust, however valuable, could be absolutely reposed in him.

The author continues, "When I read the shallow objections of irreligious scribblers that there was no reality in conversion and that missionary effort was but waste, my heart yearned to plant them for just one week on this island with the heathen and cannibals all around them and one converted man in the person of Abraham loving them, feeding them, caring for them all for the love of Jesus Cnrist. All the scepticism of Europe would hide its head in shame." The undeniable fact is that Jesus Christ is here, for he is risen. He is the one solid influence for good in human society.

Dare we come a little further? It is not enough to let the cause rest with the made-over first century Christians, with the converted Paul or the cannibal in the New Hebrides who became a Christian. What of ourselves? Has the process of our evolution been so gradual that we knew it not? How did we get the way we are? There is bad blood in all our backgrounds. Indeed it would be a frightening experience to trace our family trees back a thousand

years. How have we risen from untamed crudeness to kindness and courtesy and tenderness? Where did we learn that love and not a club is the tie that binds the home? Let's be honest. We have not climbed this ladder by the power of our own hands. We are exalted by the power of the resurrection! "I when I am lifted up will draw all men."

Knowing how his life had been transformed, Paul paid tribute saying, "It is no longer I who lives but Christ who lives in me." To the degree that we have climbed the rungs from unworthy backgrounds to freedom, honesty and love it is Christ who lives in us. We can deny it but we cannot escape it. And this is the great and glorious fact of the resurrection. He is here! For he is risen! And because he is here we have come this far on the road to decency.

In the resurrection Christ brought life and immortality to light. Death is no longer a dead end tomb; it is an adventure in fellowship. And life exalted by the fact of immortality becomes an adventure in truth, goodness and love. But this high way of Godliness is possible for we need not go alone: he is here, for he is risen. This is the grand fact of history.

SOMETHING TO TAKE WITH YOU

Gene E. Bartlett, First Baptist Church, Los Angeles, California

It is more than probable that the question of the week has been: Did you have a good Easter? You met a friend or you called up a relative, and it was a natural question for conversation. It is equally probable that the answer was, Yes. But the real answer must go deeper. The real test is what you took home with you.

The Gospel of Luke reflects this in the words with which the resurrection story closes. Thinking particularly of Peter, who ran to the tomb to see what had come to pass, Luke concludes, "He went home wondering at what had happened." Something had happened. No doubt about that! And life would never be the same because of it.

It is this kind of experience which Christ always calls out in men. Once you meet Him, you know that life can not be the same for you—when you really meet Him, that is. Tillich has said: "You cannot have a mere opinion about the Christ after you have faced Him. You can only do the truth by following or deny it by refusing."

So, with Peter, He went home wondering at what had happened. It must seem strange to have to go back home after so matchless an experience as the resurrection. Home seems so commonplace, so ordinary, so much associated with life as usual. But he did go home wondering at what had happened, and the wondering made all the difference in the world.

What do you take home with you on the Sunday after Easter? As we think of it now, when all the externals have been taken away, what continues as the abiding experience that makes life different?

I

First of all, there is a renewed assurance that God cares.

It seems so simple when we say it. We have taken it for granted so much that we lose the impact of the words: God cares. We forget what a tremendous assurance that is, and how many people in the world have never had it. The world to which Jesus came didn't have it.

And there are many in the modern world who do not have that assurance. D. T. Niles of Ceylon, a leader in the Student Christian Movement, once spent three days in a conversation with a Hindu student. They

sought to find out the areas of their agreement and disagreement. As a Christian Dr. Niles affirmed that "God is love." And the Hindu student replied, "I have always believed that." Then Dr. Niles came to the central belief that God became man in Christ. "Yes," said the Hindu, "I believe that, too." And so it went, with area after area of agreement. Then Dr. Niles spoke of God as "My Father." Here the Hindu student said, "That is not true." They had come to a distinctive of the Christian faith. Because of Christ we believe that God cares individually for us, not for men in general but for every man in particular. It was the statement of Jesus that God noted even a sparrow's fall which was impossible for the Hindu student to accept. It was too astounding a claim.

Yet, this is precisely the assurance that comes to us again in remembering the resurrection experience. In the hour of testing when the forces of evil had formed a coalition to stamp out a life, God acted. He disclosed that there is One who cares. He showed that every life is infinitely precious in His sight. The victory of Christ was, surely, God's way of making clear His care of one life.

One can imagine that some of us who hunger to believe this still are confronted with the question, How do you know? It is a great leap of faith to believe that God cares like that. How then can we come to that assurance? If we want to gain knowledge of something else, we have our ways of doing it. Sometimes we make a survey, go from door to door, or talk with people on the street, or send out questionnaires. Then we count up the results and say that we have arrived at a truth. But you will never know the love of God that way. Other times we make a study of statistics. We see what the facts and the figures have to say. But in many ways the statistics would seem to disprove that God really cares for everyone. Millions of people live out their lives in misery and despair.

You see, the ordinary ways of coming to truth will not bring us to the Christian Gospel. It had to come to us in a special way. So, God had His ways of revealing Himself that we might know of His loving care underneath all of the uncertainty and the pain and the misery that comes to human life. In short, there had to be a word spoken that was so authentic, so clear, so full of authority that it offset all other evidence to the contrary. That evidence came to us in Jesus Christ. "The Word was made flesh." He dwelt among us. In that life He lived and in that death He defeated, there has come to us now a Word beyond all other words, the evidence beyond all other evidence: God cares. He has shown us in Christ that He cares. Who could see that and not go wondering when the time comes to return home!

II

In similar way, the resurrection experience restores the great expectations in every life. What a heritage it is that awaits us in this! To lives grown dull and monotonous and drab there comes the revelation that God may break in with freshness upon our lives at any moment. Victory can come out of death, anything can happen. To live in the expectation that God does break into our lives, and that it can happen any time is, surely, an answer to the monotony that so besets us.

At its best the Christian view of life allows no boredom. In the Bible, for example, things are always happening, and they are God's doing. It's a saga of surprise. It's Jacob fleeing from the vengeance of his brother, lying down in a barren place, and suddenly having a vision of God that lets him know that the Lord was in that place. It is Moses on his routine business of caring for the flocks and seeing suddenly a bush burning beside him. It is Paul on a road to Damascus, thinking that his mission is to persecute, only to find himself

confronted by the very Christ he seeks to resist. It is the disciples standing with horror from afar and seeing their Lord upon a cross, only to discover on the third day that He lives again. What a view of life!

In the radio mail some time ago there came a personal account which illustrates the way in which God breaks into life. The broadcast had spoken of Washington Gladden, for many years pastor of the First Congregational Church of Columbus, Ohio. A letter that week brought a personal story about Dr. Gladden. A young man, seventeen years of age, was studying at art school in Columbus. One morning, passing Dr. Gladden's church, he was attracted by the crowds going in. Though very shy the young man fell in with the group and found himself greatly moved by Dr. Gladden's sermon. When the service was over the minister came down to the front of the church and many went forward to greet him. The young man shyly moved forward, too. But as people crowded around, he found himself overcome by shyness and stopped some feet away. Dr. Gladden saw the young man, excused himself, walked over to him, asked his name, and invited him to come to his study the next evening at seven. There he showed the young art student his books and talked about the Christian ministry. That night through the conversation of Dr. Gladden God reached out and touched another young man and changed his course of life to become a Christian minister. We have a special stake in that story in our city because that man is Dr. C. D. Foster, who in later years became the founder of the Religious Conference at UCLA.

To live in a world like that, when you never know when God is going to break into a life, leads us to face the day with great expectations.

III

And one thing more. A final continuing influence of that resurrection day upon our lives is in the knowledge that no defeat of Christ is final. There are many times when defeat seems so evidently at hand. But our faith speaks exactly to those times. Nothing could have been darker than the hours following the crucifixion. Nothing could have been more resplendent than the victory which came. Surely, it will be so.

We live every day at every part of our lives in the confidence that when the final judgment is made, it is right which prevails. We trust that God holds the final victory over evil. It is life and not death which writes the final chapter in every man's life.

Indeed, the mark of a great Easter experience is what you take with you. And how much has been given us to carry day by day! Here is the assurance that God cares. Here is the awakening of our great expectation. Here, too, is the assurance that no defeat of Christ is final. Like Peter of centuries ago, we surely must wonder at all that has taken place. May that deeper meaning go with us till we shall know that life can never really be the same!

BOOKS FOR PULPIT PREACHING from page 2

terpretation. (Harper & Brothers, 254 pp., $3.95)

365 Windows is a devotional book by Halford E. Luccock. These meditations, which appear originally in **Christian Herald,** represent the pertinence and creative imaginativeness which for more than a generation have made Luccock one of the most quoted of our writers. The book is commended to pastors for three reasons: as a devotional volume, as a sourcebook of "sermon-starters," and as a treasury of illustrations.

(Abingdon Press, 239 pp., $2)

In His Service by Lewis S. Mudge calls for "a restoration to the church of the power to be God's people as the Bible shows us God's people was intended to be: prophetic, creative, reconciling." Christians are a servant people called by the Servant Lord. "The chosen people of God are no longer simply the privileged leaders of society. Their insight into world events, and their vigor in creative and productive living, can no longer be exprfessed simply in the advance of Western democratic capitalistic society. Christians are challenged as never before to demonstrate by their lives that their calling under God is not for their own satisfaction and comfort, but the responsibility they owe to mankind. Today God's people may be called upon not only to prosper but to suffer—with their Lord —on behalf of mankind." The burden of this book will not readily appeal to laissez-faire American Christians, but the message of these passages is warranted by the Gospel and desperately needed. The author is as persuasive as his words are compelling. (Westminster Press, 176 pp., $3)

Pastors who have added shelves in their offices for the books by William Barclay will not wish to bypass **A Book of Everyday Prayers** which contains prayers and Bible readings for ordinary days, Sundays, and festival days. These prayers possess emphathy: the reader forgets the words are those of another and makes them his own. They are written with an appropriate eloquence, suggestive of the literary heritage within which great prayers fall, and yet the language and thought mirrors the idiom of tongue and heart of Everyman. This is an unusually good book for the family circle or for public worship. (Harper & Brothers, 128 pp., $2.50)

With Christ in the Upper Room by Lynn J. Radcliffe is a small book possessing great spiritual refreshment. Almost nothing in the book seems new; yet the ancient message is so clothed with the garments of sensitive thought and inspiring insight as to make it seem completely new. In eight winsome chapters the author embroiders upon the Gospel tapestry those colorful meanings which have made the Upper Room so significant and attractive. (Abingdon Press, 80 pp., $1.50)

The Learned Men by Gustavus S. Paine is the story of the King James Bible, the conditions from which it came, the men who translated, and the circumstances under which they labored. This fascinating chronicle adds distinctly to our appreciation of their matchless literary achievement. (Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 212 pp., $4.75)

THEODORE P. FERRIS
ROBERT J. McCRACKEN
PAUL P. FRYHLING
CHARLES F. JACOBS

THE CHRISTIAN VIEW OF DEATH

DEATH AND RESURRECTION

Theodore P. Ferris, Trinity Church, Boston, Massachusetts

"Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden." John 19:41

That simple statement of fact comes almost at the end of St. John's narrative of the Passion of our Lord, and it is one of those lines in the gospel narrative, of which there are many, that suggests infinitely more than it actually says. All it really says is that near the bare, windswept hill on which Christ was crucified there was a garden. More than likely, it was an orchard.

The narrative goes on to explain that in this particular garden there was a tomb that had never been used before. The owner offered it as a place to lay the body of Jesus. Since the Sabbath began at sundown and, since according to the Jewish law no one could be buried on the Sabbath, the fact that the tomb in the garden was near the place of crucifixion made it convenient, and so it was done.

The words themselves suggest infinitely more than these bare narrative facts. At least they do to my mind; perhaps I read too much into them, but I like to think that God speaks to us when we read the Bible with intelligent imagination.

I

"Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden." One thing that those words immediately suggest is the fact that Jesus rose from the dead. The very place where the darkness had been so dense was the place where it began to dawn. The place where death seemed to have the last word was the very place where life began to make itself felt. The very place where evil seemed to be in full swing was the place where love began to be most powerfully at work.

So often it happens that way, doesn't it? Out of the ashes of an old city a new city more proud than the first one, and more beautiful, rises. I shall never forget seeing the city of Rotterdam in the summer of 1948. I was on the train on my way to the Amsterdam Conference of the World Council of Churches. I thought we were in the vicinity of Rotterdam and I asked the conductor where the city was. "There," he said. And there was nothing but broken concrete, nothing that stood higher than a shrub. Today Rotterdam stands as one of the proudest, most beautiful cities in Europe.

The countries in Europe which were most completely wrapped in medieval darkness were the very countries where the Renaissance flowered in its most splendid glory. Battlefields drenched in blood, we are ashamed to confess, are the very same fields covered with poppies five or ten years later. On the very site on which four churches were destroyed by fire the Cathedral of Chartres now wonderfully stands.

And out of the inner darkness of a deranged mind came the sun-drenched canvases of Vincent van Gogh. Just a day or two before he took his own life one of the doctors in the institution where he had been living and painting magnificently said to him: "Ah, Vincent, if only I had painted one canvas like this! I cure people's pain—but they die in the

end. These sunflowers of yours—they will cure the pain in people's hearts for centuries and centuries."

So you might put this down in your memory on this Easter Day, put it in that place where you keep things that are important, to be taken out and remembered on dark days. The darkest point in a man's life is often the very point where life begins. The blackest, bleakest spot in your life may be the very place where something will begin to grow. In the darkest experiences of life there are often the surest signs of resurrection.

I have seen it over and over again; I know it not only theoretically, but from actual experience. I have seen people rise right up out of the ashes; you would have to see it to believe it. So as you listen to this simple line in the narrative, "Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden," let it suggest this to you: Close to every real Calvary there is a garden.

II

Now, having said that, we must go on and say that death and resurrection do not go together automatically, so to speak; not naturally, as a matter of course. In nature they do. If you put a seed into the darkness of the ground, and if you give it enough water and the sun shines on it, in the normal course of events the seed will disintegrate, die, lose its life, and the new life will begin to come up through the earth.

That does not h a p p e n on the human level. On the human level darkness and death by itself can be deadly, utterly deadly. Put a self-centered man into the darkness of physical collapse, and the darkness may paralyze him. Put a pleasure-loving person into the darkness of poverty, disease and misfortune and the darkness may finally ruin him.

Drive a success-loving, money-mad young man into the wilderness, as another young Man was once driven by the Spirit, and the wild beasts may devour him; he may not be able to take it. Set a clever, ambitious doctor, who caters to the rich, in Schweitzer's hospital in Africa, and the darkness may black out his spirit.

We must f a c e this; we must acknowledge the fact that neither darkness nor death in human experience is any guarantee of resurrection or life.

It wasn't the fact that Jesus died that led to his resurrection. It was the fact that he lived, and that his life was full of compassion, and that his one intention and desire was to reach out to seek and to save the lost, to understand, to pity, to rebuild the broken lives of people around him, to do his Father's will. This was the life that was so vital, so real, so elemental that it could not be hid, and death had no dominion over it. Death had no dominion over him because he stood in no ultimate fear of death, or of anything that implied death. He surrendered his life at the very beginning, and what happened to him from that point on was of no real concern to him. His concern was what happened to the people because of him.

So we have to put d o w n this solemn fact that it is only the dedicated life that really rises out of darkness and death. The others just disintegrate. You know what I mean without my saying much more about it, and we must not now become heroic about ourselves, because we know too much about ourselves. But we know from observation that the people who rise up out of the ashes are not the people who have led the careless, casual, superficial, shallow lives. I have never seen it happen. The people who rise up out of the ashes are the people whose lives have first been buried in something, and buried deep, where the d a r k n e s s bruised them, and where the suffering was bitter and hard to take. I have seen those people rise up out of ashes in a way that is almost unbelievable until you see it. In other words, no cross, no crown. No real

death, no real resurrection.

III

There is one more thing these words suggest, perhaps not quite so obviously as the other two we have mentioned. It is more difficult to put into words, but I feel it must be done, not only by way of an Easter affirmation of truth but also by way of avoiding a misunderstanding on your part. These words suggest the fact that the reason why the death and resurrection of Jesus illuminate, as I sincerely believe they do, our little deaths and resurrections is that his death and resurrection is entirely different from ours.

You know how in Church we emphasize week after week the things we have in common with our Lord and Master Jesus Christ, and how we find in him fragments of our humanity—our temptations, our suffering and our pain. We rejoice in every line of the New Testament which assures us that he was "made like unto his brethren in every respect." We must not lose sight of the fact, however, that while he is like us in all things save sin, he is different from us, even from the best of us. I try to compare him with the best I know. I hold up beside him Abraham Lincoln, Mahatma Gandhi; these two for me represent the best that human nature has produced in the last hundred years, the finest flower of the human spirit. It isn't so much that they shrink or shrivel in contrast with him. They don't. They reflect his glory! But they are different. It isn't that their deaths lose their tragic power, or their influence dwindles when we put it beside his, for that is not so. It is simply that his death is different, his resurrection is different; that there is about him another diimension that there is in neither of these and in none of us.

What makes the difference? I have tried to say it so many times and, of course, it is the kind of thing that you can never really say. You can only see it and feel the power of it. The thing that makes the difference is that God was in him, reconciling the world, drawing the world unto Himself. It isn't that God wasn't in the others. To a certain degree, and in a certain way, the Creator is in every creature, but God was in Jesus doing something that He had not done before, both revealing and releasing His power.

And Jesus knew it from the very beginning. We may question some of the claims that the Gospel writers attribute to him. I personally do, but I would never dream of questioning the fact that Jesus knew from the very beginning that he was in the Father and the Father was in him, and that there was between them a kind of intimacy and union such as had never existed before and never has since, so that when you saw one, you saw the other.

Can you see now, perhaps, why it is that this particular death and resurrection opens the gates of life, such as no other event in the history of the world has ever done? Something was done in heaven that made an everlasting difference on earth.

In March, 1935, a poem by Rudyard Kipling appeared in a technical publication. I copied the first verse, and this is it:

> Veiled and Secret Power
> Whose path we search in vain,
> Be with us in our hour
> Of overthrow and pain;
> That we—by which sure token
> We know thy ways are true—
> In spite of being broken,
> Because of being broken—
> May rise and build anew
> Stand up and build anew!

That is just about the heart of the Easter Gospel. In spite of b e i n g broken, because of being broken, like him, in him, we can stand up and build anew. "For in the place where he was crucified there was a garden," and it was more than a matter of proximity!

DEATH, BE NOT PROUD

Robert J. McCracken, The Riverside Church, New York, New York

The Apostle Peter on the day of Pentecost declared, "But God raised Him up, having loosed the pangs of death, because it was not possible for Him to be held by it." Peter had not always had that for his deepest conviction. The day we call Good Friday had been a black Friday for him and for all the disciples. The crucifixion of Jesus had seemed like the end of everything, the deathblow to all they had expected and believed in. What were the hopes they had cherished but empty dreams? Evil had been too strong for their Master. The same fate had befallen Him as had overtaken many a prophet before Him. Soon by all except a handful of folk He would be forgotten. Peter and his companions were sunk in disillusionment and despair and went about in fear of their lives.

Then came the breathtaking experience of Easter morning. Jesus, who had been crucified, dead and buried, was alive. It was something, to begin with, that they could not credit or comprehend, but as more and more e v i d e n c e was afforded them, incredulity and bewilderment gave way to assurance and exhilaration. The face of the w o r l d was changed for them. Their faith revived and their confidence was restored. In the final analysis the best evidence for the Resurrection of Christ is the transformation that took place in those men. They were no longer dejected disciples of a dead Master but ardent followers of a living Lord. Within a few days they were out on the streets broadcasting the good news that Jesus was still living, still guiding, still at work in the world.

Within a few weeks they wondered that they could ever have believed anything else. In retrospect they saw so clearly that their fears and pessimism had been groundless and that what had happened was bound in the nature of the case to happen. It was inevitable; anything other than what had happened would have been inconceivable. Their Master — the Pioneer of Life — was not the kind of person who could be subdued or vanquished by death. He had gone stalking through it, blazing a trail, carrying the frontiers with Him, bringing back the title-deeds. A life like His, a mind and character like His, could never have been ended at the grave in defeat and nothingness.

That is our conviction, too. We cannot conceive of Christ crucified, dead and buried—period. A noble spirit like His a spent force, at the mercy of an indignity done to His body. A personality like His, by common consent the finest the earth has known, swept at death into extinction. Good Friday really Black Friday and the end of everything. The Cross the last, the final chapter in His story.

Can you believe that? Who can believe that? Who can make sense of that? We say what Peter did, "It was not possible for Him to be held by death."

I

There are three considerations to take into account in this connection. There is the demand of the mind. Have you ever asked yourself why in generation after generation the greatest thinkers have believed in the life beyound death? It is because they have never been able to persuade themselves by any kind of logic or argument that man's ultimate destiny is a rendezvous with the dust. Knowing the brightness with which man's spirit can burn in his mortal body, they have refused to concede that at death it can be extinguished. It has seemed to them irrational that we should be called into being, permitted to start our development as human spirits, given glimpses of

greater possibilities, only to have our growth ruthlessly terminated by death. The mind cannot make sense of such an assumption or rest in it. For thinker after thinker it is the very rationality of the universe that is at stake.

Doesn't your mind work in the same way? Think of the saints, the prophets, the poets, the musicians. Are they all dead and turned to clay? Were they made to live their life and do their work only to rot in the grave? What a waste of creative skill, of rich intelligence, of noble personality! Could anything be less rational? Think of your own relatives, loved and lost awhile. When death comes to somebody near to us, affects us intimately and personally, takes from us one who was at the center of our existence, we cannot help asking: What is death? Is it the end? Or is it a new beginning? Does it mean the dissolution of personality? Or does it lead to the emancipation of personality? Is it a blank wall? Or is it an open door? The second alternative is the one you instinctively feel after. You think of your loved one and you just cannot credit that all is over with him. You cannot reconcile yourself to his utter extinction. Your mind cries out against the conclusion that he was no better than a bit player, that he was given a brief line on the stage of time, and that he has made his final exit.

William Rose Benet contributed the preface to a book which represented the best work of a young author who had died on the threshold of a promising literary career. "We have all had such friends," wrote Benet, "mysteriously taken before they had been given time to leave some permanent impress of themselves except in our hearts. I cannot, for myself, believe that a spirit, such as his, is wasted . . . I myself believe in a reason and a purpose for such spirits which does not exhaust itself merely upon this imperfect world. It is this faith, largely, which helps me to live." When death removes near and dear friends don't we all reason in some such fashion? But what force the conviction has when applied to Jesus Christ! It is incongruous, and incredible as well as incongruous, to think of Him as having made His final exit. It was impossible for Him to be held by death.

II

The conscience as well as the mind makes this demand. Belief in the life after death has persisted in century after century because of a persuasion, so deepseated as to seem ineradicable, that in another world if not in this one the balance between right and wrong will be adjusted, truth will be vindicated, evil will be redressed and justice done. They say that in the old slave-owning days Negroes in the South used to strike fear into the hearts of cruel and unjust masters by singing around their campfires at nightfall:

My Lord sees all you do, and
my Lord hears all you say,
And my Lord keeps a writing
all the time.

This was the confidence to which Ivan in "The Brothers Karamazov" kept returning: "I believe like a child that suffering will be healed and made up for, that in the world's finale something so precious will come to pass that it will suffice for all our hearts, for the comforting of our resentments, for the atonement of all the crimes of humanity . . . I want to be there when everyone suddenly understands what it has all been for. All the religions of the world are built on this longing."

The hunger for justice as the cornerstone of a spiritual universe is back of the demand for life after death. When men are morally flippant they say with Heine, "Of course God will forgive me; that is His business." When they are morally serious they say with Calvin, "Without judgment there is no God." There is something in us which instinctively requires that it shall not be the same in the end

for Judas and John the Baptist, for Nero and Paul, for Father Damien who gave his life in the service of a leper colony and Napoleon who waded through bloodshed to a throne, for Hitler and Gandhi.

Do you see how this is related to the Easter message? The Cross is the saddest symbol in all history. It points only to despair and disillusionment, unless it has for its sequel the Resurrection. If Good Friday was the end of everything for Jesus, if all was over with the crucifixion, if He was vanquished by death, life has neither rhyme nor reason; it is a sorry, meaningless tangle and mocks our fondest hopes. Can you abide such reading of the situation? Do you not find yourself saying with Peter—"It was not possible for Him to be held by death"?

III

The heart as well as the mind and the conscience makes this demand, Professor Palmer of Harvard used to say that when a man finds himself truly in love mortality becomes unthinkable. Love is oneness and cannot brook separation. When two people mean everything to each other the death of the one rends the heart of the other. There is an unappeasable yearning for reunion. After the death of her husband Fanny Kingsley had three words inscribed on his tombstone: "Amavimus, amamus, amabimus." We have loved, we love, we shall love. When Dr. W. R. Matthews, Dean of St. Paul's Cathedral, London, broadcast four talks on immortality he received from interested listeners some 1900 letters. About them he commented, "If there is any lesson to be learned from the letters I have had it is that love is the main source of the desire for life beyond death.

Do you see how this, too, is related to the Easter mesage? The first Christians were sure that they were bound indissolubly to their Master by the bonds of a love that death could not sever. Their love for Him and, even more, His love for them—that was the foundation of all their hopes. Everywhere in the New Testament we find them speaking not only of One who had lived among them but of One from whom nothing could separate them, not even the last dread enemy itself. So we have the sublime peroration of the eighth chapter of Romans: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? . . . No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

In John Masefield's play, "The Trial of Jesus," the Roman centurion who stood at the foot of the Cross talks with Pilate's wife just after the crucifixion. "Do you think He is dead?" she asks him. "No, lady," he answers, "I don't." "Then where is He?" And the reply she receives is, "Let loose in the world, lady, where neither Roman nor Jew can stop His truth." That's not fiction; it is fact. For sixty generations that has been the Christian belief—that Jesus still lives and reigns, that His presence and power are still available, that His promise still stands, "Lo, I am with you always."

WHERE DEATH DIES

Paul P. Fryhling, First Covenant Church, Minneapolis, Minnesota

Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. John 11:25-26.

In a world ridden with suspicion and driven by fear, we hear much about "ultimate weapons." Persons born later than 1940 have known nothing but this kind of strife-ridden, fear-driven world. The nomenclature of their lives includes the A-bomb, the H (for "Hell") bomb and the C (for cobalt) or **the bomb.** With the rocket propulsion of great engines, sending these missiles along a kind of mathematical string through space with pinpoint accuracy, the known warheads are delivered from the camp of the enemy. Our political enemy claims to have the ultimate in destructive weapons. We d a r e not doubt their word; they have been proved correct all too often.

We have a greater enemy, however, than our political enemy in the world. We have a spiritual enemy. The Bible says that "our adversary the Devil goeth about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." Paul writes again that "we wrestle not a g a i n s t flesh and blood but against principalities and powers and the rulers of this world darkness." Our enemy is a spiritual enemy.

Nevertheless, and this may be surprising to many Christian people, Satan's arsenal is really quite limited. He has actually few weapons. One could amost reduce his arsenal to this: He has but the power of suggestion. From the very first temptation in the Garden of Eden to the great temptation of our Lord in the wilderness and in all of the temptations to which you and I are subject, Satan's only weapon there is suggestion. He cannot make any person to sin. He can only propose the way. The gullible and the depraved—and that includes us all—follow.

However, he does have an ultimate weapon which God has given into his hands to use. That is death. In the B o o k of the Revelation, the twentieth chapter, it is recorded that after Satan himself shall have been cast into the lake of fire, death and Hades will be cast in with him. Man's final enemies shall then have been done away!

When Jesus raised Lazarus from the grave, restoring a body already in the first s t a g e s of decay, He demonstrated a mastery over Satan's ultimate threat that caused S a t a n himself, and those who were his pawns, to rise up in fury to seek Christ's destruction. No one can invade Satan's territory without bestirring the wrath of man's greatest enemy.

Note, therefore, the ending of this great story in the eleventh chapter of John. When Lazarus was raised from the dead, "Many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on Him. But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done. Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council and said, What are we to do? for this man doeth many miracles. If we let him thus alone all men will believe on him: and the Romans will come and take both our place and our nation. And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, You know nothing at all, nor consider it that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people rather than that the whole nation perish . . . Then from that

day forth they took counsel together to put Him to death."

Because He had chosen the cross, and because He mastered Satan's ultimate weapon, Jesus Christ can give to all who trust Him both victory over sin and victory over death.

I

First of all, Christ interests Himself in our life. One would miss a great point in this chapter if one should only be concerned with the death and resurrection of Lazarus. The chapter begins, after all, with Jesus Christ interested in the life of some very normal, ordinary people—Mary, Martha and Lazarus. He is not interested only in projecting us to the other, the eternal, world, though He is interested in that. The Christian faith does not profess to offer, as someone has so naughtily described it, "pie in the sky when you die." Sometimes Christians have given a false impression by apparently "being so interested in the other world that they are no earthly good in this."

Jesus Christ, if I read this chapter correctly, is interested in life here and now—in the n o r m a l, happy routine of life. Jesus Christ loved Martha and Mary and Lazarus. It is obvious in the context that He had often been in their home. He had sat in their dining room for meals. He enjoyed the fellowship of the normal, happy routine of life in this place. He shared spiritual blessings with them.

Never forget that Jesus Christ takes an interest in life as it is in the here and now.

In this life, He translates many of our trials into triumphs. When Jesus Christ received the word that "one whom you love, Lazarus, is sick," He said to the disciples, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God." It was natural that Martha and Mary should communicate with Jesus when Lazarus was sick. It was the most normal thing in the world for them to do. Just as it should be normal for you, whenever difficulties arise in your life, that you should include these in your daily prayers. You should expect also, as they did, that Jesus Christ would come and would lend His help.

What is your problem? Fear of sickness? Hardship? Domestic problems? Loss of a job? Wondering if you are in the right career? It might be that Jesus is saying to you in your problem just now, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God." The suffering which God permits His friends always has a purpose. God may very well in your problem be seeking to work out His greater good. If you'd like to make a test of this, look back upon your life, just the last decade or even the past year. See how many times, like Mary and Martha, you were frustrated and afraid, and you cried to God. Now, perchance, you are facing another problem. How did God deal with that previous problem? As you look back, you see the way in which He led you. He did not let you down. The "sickness was not unto death, but for the glory of God." Someone has said, trying to allay our fears, "Today is the tomorrow that you worried about yesterday." Paul put it better, "All things work together for good to those who love God, who are called according to His purpose." (Romans 8:28).

But sometimes there is a sickness unto death. There are times when by His permissive will we must bear the dark and heavy burden. Then what? Then trust Him.

Both Martha and Mary, when meeting Jesus, said, "If thou hadst been here my brother had not died." I believe that was true. I believe that if Jesus had been present, His overreaching sympathy and love would not have p e r m i t t e d them to go through the trial. But He chose not to be there. He stayed away on purpose. However, let us be quick to observe, both Mary's and Martha's faith was limited here. It wasn't necessary for Him to be physically

present to help. He had healed the centurion's son at Capernaum by merely speaking the word. But there are times when Jesus, in a sense, keeps Himself away so as not to solve your problem immediately. Then you can count on it, it is for a greater purpose. He can prevent trial, but He does not always do it. We bear such trials for a greater good. His interest is not absent, even though He does not change immediately the trial into triumph.

Said the father whose young son was killed when an automobile ran over him and his tricycle, "Pastor, where was God when my son was killed?" The pastor, with God-given wisdom, said, "He was just where He was when His own Son was killed. He was there, and He will always be there."

> "I know not where His islands lift
> Their fronded palms in air;
> I only know I cannot drift
> Beyond His love and care."

Jesus Christ is interested in life.

II

But we must move on a step here to consider also the fact that He involves Himself in our death. Jesus Christ came down to His friends in Bethany because Lazarus was dead. If we could know and truly believe that Jesus is involved in and sympathizes with the hurt and sorrow in death, we should be less afraid. His sincere sharing in the sorrow and grief of this family was obvious to all. "He groaned in the spirit and was troubled." "He was deeply moved and distressed" (Phillips). The people said, "See how He loved him!"

"Earth has no sorrow that heaven cannot heal," because He is personally involved. Jesus Christ is involved in the trial even of sorrow and grief that you may be going through. He is involved in the suffering of spirit that you may be bearing. He is there. Count on His presence, and count on His power.

There was something even deeper in His involvement in the death of Lazarus. He must Himself pass through this death. As He approached the grave of Lazarus, "He groaned again in the spirit." Here He faced His greatest test.

He was called upon to perform a miracle the like of which He had not up to that day performed. He had raised others from death. They were "sleeping," as He said about the daughter of Jairus, having just expired. The young son of the widow at Nain had been dead only a few hours, for they always buried their dead the same day. But here was a situation where a body had lain in the grave beyond the seventy-two hours, three days, which according to the biologist is the time when decay begins, when the body fluids, the humours, have completed their revolution. Never before had Jesus Christ been tested to perform such a miracle.

Martha said to Him as they came to the grave: "Master, it's too late now. He has been in the grave four days. Don't do anything now." Perhaps she didn't want Him to be put to the test in which she feared He might fail. Certainly she didn't believe that it could be done. Jesus "groaned again in the spirit." Was He thinking also of that fast-approaching time when He should be lay in the bands of death? Would the promise of the Psalmist hold true. "Thou shalt not suffer thy holy one to see corruption"? (Psalm 16:10). Could He have been groaning in the spirit as He was approaching this ultimate test of Himself?

Who can know the mysteries of the incarnation? Who can know the mystery of the Garden of Gethsemane? Who can know the mystery of the cross where the virus of sin was injected into the pure Lamb of God making "Him to be sin who knew no sin" on our behalf? Who can know, indeed, how close were the odds between these two celestial

giants, Jesus, the Son of God, and Lucifer, the son of the morning, when Jesus lay those three days in Death?

If Jesus groaned in the spirit as He approached the grave of Lazarus, no person need feel ashamed, however staunch a Christian he may be, if facing death he quavers. Death is, after all, Satan's ultimate weapon and man's greatest fear. However, the child of God who has his faith firmly fixed in Jesus Christ faces death not with fear but with hope and joy. There is no longer any fear in death, for the love of God and faith in Christ, who has prepared the way for us, have eliminated all fear.

Nevertheless, Jesus does make death realistic. When they rolled away the stone, that was all that man could do, and the grave was opened where death lay stark, odorous and real, Jesus calmly waited and prayed. Death is real, but the power of God is greater still. There was great wonder, but little of beauty in the resurrection of Lazarus, as he stumbled out of the cave wrapped about with a shroud and walking to his home. For here Jesus raised a man not to glorified life, not in the new body that will be eternal, but He raised a man back to a dying life. Perhaps that's why Jesus groaned in the spirit. Why should He bring Lazarus back from the glories of the beyond, back into the life where sin and Satan were? Only the final resurrection "when clothed in His brightness" will have beauty and glory.

III

Jesus Christ not only is interested in life and involved in our death, but He interposes Himself between life and that ultimate death. Here we come to the classic words, the teaching of this great story. "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die."

It is personal. "I am the resurrection, and the life," said the Lord. Not a vague generality nor a universal certainty, it is personal in Jesus Christ. In the fourteenth chapter of this Gospel, He said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." Said the Apostle Paul, "There is one God and one mediator between man and God, the man Christ Jesus." This redemption life which is eternal is personal in Jesus Christ. It is not merely a doctrine. Godet has put it well, "Jesus seeks to exchange adherence to a doctrinal truth for confidence in himself." You can believe a doctrine, but you cannot trust it. Doctrine challenges the intellect but holds on appeal to the heart. You can accept a doctrine, but it cannot save you. Only Christ can save.

This interposed life of Christ is present. "I am the resurrection and the life." It does not commence at death, it inheres in life. "You shall not perish," Jesus says to all who believe. He that heareth my words and believeth Him that sent me hath everlasting life, and does not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life." (John 5:24).

It is perennial. "I am the resurrection and the life." First Jesus speaks a word to all who shall have died in faith, "Though he were dead, yet shall he live." Paul re-echoes this in the first letter to the Thessalonians, speaking about those who have died in Christ, "those who sleep in Jesus will God bring with him . . . for the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the archangel's call and the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ shall rise first." (I Thes. 4:16).

It must still be that Christians shall pass through physical death, but it is no longer the grisly, fearsome thing. For the Christian, and for him alone, the words of Longfellow are indeed true:

> There is no death! What seems
> so is transition;

This life of mortal breath
Is but a suburb of the life elysian,
Whose portal we call Death.

Jesus speaks also a long-range, prophetic word about Life that interposes between us and death: "And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." Again Paul re-echoes Christ's words in his letter to the Corinthians, "Behold, I tell you a mystery, we shall not all sleep, but we shall be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: the trumpet will sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (I Cor. 15:51-52). Yes, it is eternal. "Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die."

Christ broke Satan's ultimate weapon, but his price was crucifixion. For us the result is glory. He broke the scare-weapon of Satan's psychological warfare, and we fear it no more. "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be unto God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!" (I Cor. 15:55-57). In Christ the victory is won for all who will receive Him.

HOW TO COPE WITH GRIEF

Charles F. Jacobs, First Congregational Church, Waterloo, Iowa

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Matthew 5:4.

It was a deep understanding of life that caused Jesus, in his second word from the mountainside, to say: "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted." Death differs from all other experiences in its universality. That "it is appointed unto men once to die," is an unarguable fact. Each of us carries about in his body the seeds of at least one incurable disease—mortality. What is more distressing is the knowledge that our dear ones must submit to the inexorable power of death. Robert Frost, in his poem, "In a Disused Graveyard," reminds us of our finiteness:

The living come with grassy tread
To read the gravestones on the hill;
The graveyard draws the living still,
But never anymore the dead.
The verses in it say and say:
"The ones who living come today
To read the stones and go away
Tomorrow dead will come to stay."

Death belongs in the category of things which Professor Wieman has called the indecent things of life. We do not like to think about it and we are reluctant to talk about it. When we get together, we talk about football, politics, the stock market and the weather, but we refuse to talk about the big things of the soul—life, love, death, and immortality. Only in rare instances, when alone with an intimate friend, will we discuss the important things of the soul. Because of our evasive way of facing death, we are seldom capable of coping with grief when it intrudes upon our peaceful ways.

I want to share with you some things that I have learned out of the school of experience. It is not easy to talk to another about his grief. The "heart knoweth its own bitterness." Yet at no place in our Christian faith are we more inconsistent than in this matter of separation and loss. We embrace a faith that forever faces the sunrise, but we do not

want to face the fact of death. Curiously enough, we are not free in this life until we are free from the fear of death. The riddle of human existence cannot be resolved until we can say: "Life is good; so also is death good." "Your death is but a piece of the world's order," said Montaigne, "but a parcel of the world's life." When Theodore Roosevelt was notified of his son's death in the First World War, he said: "Only those are fit to live who do not fear to die, and none are fit to die who have shrunk from the joys of life and the duty of life. Both life and death are part of the same Great Adventure." Only when one has achieved spiritual maturity can he say with Saint Paul: "O Death, where is thy sting?"

But no matter how or when grief arrives, it is never a welcome visitor in our house. It is the better part of wisdom to prepare the mind and the heart for its visitation. I feel sorry for people who have not come to grips with Jesus' second utterance from the mountainside: "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted."

I

For one thing, we must come to see that death has a positive value to the individual and to society. In the infinite processes of creation, God has ordained that we die one at a time. Always a generation is passing away and another rising up. Because we die one at a time we are able to store up wisdom and to transmit it to the oncoming generation. The late Joshua Loth Liebman in his book, "Peace of Mind," says: "The presence of death makes more meaningful all the values of life. It is the teacher making us aware of the fragility and the nobility of the human dream."

This is a world where everything has a price. Death is the great evaluator. It is the finiteness and the fragility of life that makes it the pearl of great price; the gift for which there is no equivalent. It is the knowledge of life's brevity and the fact that it is held always in a fragile vessel that makes our years so priceless. If life were a mere assemblage of years without a terminus, it would be a life of boredom and of monotony.

Again, death teaches us that no individual is indispensable to the race or to any of its institutions. Society precedes the individual. Occasionally giant souls arise and move across a generation in such power and splendor that one begins to think of the persistence of these men as essential to society. But the great man submits to the unbending law of death, and society goes on. God's emphasis is upon the great society from whence great individuals come forth.

Giving a time limit to life also has the advantage of maintaining a balance between hope and wisdom. Age is given to wisdom; its many years produce caution and prudence. But caution and prudence are only a part of life. Through death God has provided that both hope and prudence shall be intermingled. Age is conservative; youth is given to hope and venturesomeness. There comes a time in God's infinite plan when hope and courage, attributes of the young, take over the direction of the race.

I call your attention to the truth that the experience which we dread above all others, the experience of death, confers upon each of us certain benefits. It is the evaluator, teaching us the preciousness of our days. Death puts a frame around life. Only when death comes is the individual a complete individual. To acknowledge these facts about our own biological finiteness will not remove from the heart the sting of death; but it is an essential step which must be taken if we are to work out a technique for coping with grief.

II

Let us come, then, to another

essential for coping with grief: the necessity of accepting it. Grief is a violent experience; it sends our fondest hopes and dreams catapulting into ruins. Because it is such a violent experience, we must learn to face it lest it destroy us. We have been reluctant to accept the fact that some day grief will push open the door of our own household and walk inside. We have couched our fear of death in evasive terms. Sometimes we adopt the expedient of denial; we say that death is not real, that it is only in our minds. We have devised facades by which we try to deny the reality of grief. We have turned our graveyards into "memorial parks." We will not use the word death but we speak of "the departed one" and "the passing of a friend." So abhorrent is death that we will not call it by its name.

But death is real. It represents an awful rending and tearing of the human spirit. Man is a spirit but he is also of the earth earthy. And our hopes and dreams are so intertwined with the flesh that death becomes a cruel experience. There is no dodging its reality! Death is not a solitary experience; it is the disruption of gentle and intricate relationships. The person struck down by grief, by the death of a loved one, is himself a casualty. Part of him lies buried in the grave. For one it means the dissolution of the physical body; for the survivor it means dissolution of a vital part of the spirit.

All of this was in Jesus' mind when he said quite frankly: "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted." Mourning is an absolute necessity. To pretend that nothing has happened, to hide yourself to the awful reality of grief, is to invite disaster. The sooner that mourning takes place, the better it will be for the one struck down by grief. Take a look at some of the ways by which we try to disregard the admonition of our Lord. When grief comes we may turn to our work with determined effort, but we are not really facing our problem; we are running away from it through work. We may keep the room of a loved one just as he kept it in life, but again the attempt is not to mourn but to avoid mourning. Sometimes, when we are up against grief, we may give ourselves to travel, to excessive social activities, or, what is worse, we may grow bitter and curse God, the church, and life itself. Eventually such individuals, if they are to achieve happiness, must do what they ought to have done in the beginning—they must weep out their tears. Only when the body has emptied itself of its grief and when the heart has divulged itself of its tears, can the quiet processes of God's healing begin.

Some will grieve silently and some demonstrably, but however it is done, one must accept his grief. The death of our dear ones must be absorbed in our own being. And in the experience of mourning we discover something important—grief can be a creative experience. Time, we say, is the great healer. But it is not time that heals. It is the quiet processes of God working in the heart prepared for him and receptive to him that provides the healing. Hundreds of times in my ministry I have witnessed the creative power of mourning. I have seen people throw off the bondage of grief and walk in a new life of the spirit. One thing all of us learns through tears is a greater appreciation of the struggles of others. Having suffered ourselves, we can say to the grief-stricken soul: "I understand. I have passed through the valley which now engulfs you." And this understanding brings to the sorrowing one a quiet strength.

III

As we prepare for the meeting of grief, another thought is important to keep in mind: death is not so final as it seems. Death brings an end to the physical body as an object in nature, but over the grave we learn that life is truly more than the flesh.

here is always a residue, a vast re-
ainder, which death cannot take
om us. Those who have known love
its highest form cannot be de-
rived of that love. Love never fails.
is not subject to the power of
eath. When the heart is breaking,
ill we can say of the love that we
ve shared that it is indestructible.
his was what the disciples learned.
fter days of mourning their eyes
ere opened and they recognized
at their Master was not destroyed
death, but that he was alive ever-
ore. And what these men came to
el about their Lord, each of us can
y of the one we have loved—"death
more hath dominion over him."

Death, disastrous as it may be to
r noble dreams, is never the great
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lways there is a margin that separa-
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ve had a young person in your
dst for a time has opened doors
the wonders of God's world that
uld have been otherwise closed to
u. Through all the years to come,
e life of the child who shared with
u a brief journey will be an in-
iration and a joy. This was God's
ft to you. You would have pre-
rred that the journey be longer,
t at least you have had the journey.
ath cannot take this from you.
acknowledge this fact is an im-
rtant step on the way to a mastery
grief.

Who can say that a brief life may
t have been more important to
e world than a life of long years?
e memory of a child often spurs
on to deeds of nobility that we
uld not otherwise undertake. One
of the great preachers of our time has dedicated one of his books: "To the Radiant Memory of Our Son, Sidney Stanton, who had planned to be a good preacher." How often these children, though dead, speak to us still, reminding us that mere length of life in God's economy is irrelevant. It is the quality of life and not its length that is finally important. This does not remove the pain, the agony which all parents experience in the loss of a child, but it does help them maintain a balance in the hour of loss.

IV

Let us go on now to the conclusion of the matter. Jesus said: "Blessed are those who mourn," then he added, "for they shall be comforted." He first emphasizes the practical necessity of mourning—the means by which the body empties itself of grief. In the process of mourning creation seems to take place in the life of the individual. The spirit of God hovering over the darkened soul brings out of it light and hope. Jesus recognized the therapeutic value of weeping. It is not wisdom for us to close our eyes to the heart's deep grief, to pretend that it is not real. Tears are as much part of us as laughter. It is through grief, accepted and assimilated into our being, that we are able to accept our loss and to take up the broken threads of life and suffuse them into a new whole.

Perhaps the second part of our text is more difficult to understand than the first. What does Jesus mean by the words "those who mourn shall be comforted?" I used to think of comfort as the compassion, sympathy and pity which our friends lavish upon us in time of adversity. But Jesus meant more than this; he meant that those who grieve will be strengthened. That is what comfort means throughout the New Testament.

See how this works in every day experience. The individual who is up against some enormous problem is

not so much in need of being consoled and pitied as in need of strength which will enable him to cope with the problem that baffles him. It was said of Job, to borrow Dr. Moffatt's translation, "he spoke words that set men on their feet." That is the real meaning of being comforted. When the adolescent comes home with a soul-searching problem, he does not want pity from his parents; he wants guidance to the point where he can meet and master his problem.

"Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted." Often this strength comes to us in unexpected moments and from hidden reservoirs. In the depth of our grief, a power not our own enters into us and strengthens us. Let us take an example from history. Thomas Cranmer, a pivotal character in the English Reformation, because of his gentle and indecisive nature, found it difficult to deal with the harsh realities of sixteenth century political life. When Queen Mary came to the throne he recanted his protestantism. His accusers, in a vain effort to add to his humiliation, ordered him burned at the stake. But something happened to this tortured man as he stood with the flames rising about him. He recanted his recantation and, extending his hand into the flames, exclaimed, "This hand has offended." Then his statuesque frame collapsed into death. In the hour of death he had been strengthened by a power not his own.

It is the better part of wisdom to accept our loss and to weep out our tears. And in the very processes of mourning we build a bridge over which we pass from our sorrow to the acceptance of a new life. We cannot know what lies beyond the gates of death, but if we have taken to ourselves the wisdom enclosed in the words, "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted," we can with confidence say:

I know not where His islands
Lift their fronded palms in air.
I only know I cannot drift,
Beyond His love and care.

WORTH QUOTING from page 2

to Jesus? What marks do we bear? It is not always that these marks are as dramatic as those of martyrdom and persecution. More often the evidences of our discipleship are revealed in simpler, quieter ways. How often the marks of Jesus are evident through the total stewardship of life—the way a Christian works, the interest he takes in other people, the quality of his citizenship, the generosity with which he gives of his money and time and talent to the Kingdom of God.

Edwin T. Dahlberg

* * *

The real task of evangelism and renewal in our time probably depends more upon the ability of the Church to follow its ever-moving members with a real sense of pastoral care than upon the relatively easy job of recruiting new members in an age when religion has become a popular movement.

Truman B. Douglass

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In spite of an innate eagerness to help our fellow man we have fashioned a strange system that guarantees for us a minimum of personal involvement, either emotional or physical. We now so streamline our charitable impulses and so organize our humane feelings as to make the writing of a check the extent of our effort . . . We can avoid the accusation of being anti-charitable and still be aloof . . . Thus, we can do our duty and still personally stay away from the sordid areas of need. The underlying principle is that charity or the support of eleemosynary enterprises must be made painless. It must not touch the

heart nor fan the desire to stretch forth one's hand. Man's need must be kept a shadowy, amorphous, impersonal thing. We seem to feel that our consciences are clear when we keep it that way, and meanwhile our time is free for other things . . . This apathy . . . inherited from forebears . . . will (be) transmited to children, an apathy created out of a reluctance to step to the front, to rouse self, and to assume certain direct responsibilities to change what is known to be wrong.

Samuel B. Gould

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One man, out of two-and-a-half billions of people who inhabit this planet, is nothing. On the other hand, ONE man is also everything. He is your father, even though he is but one man, and that makes him everything . . . he is one man, William Wilberforce who became obsessed with the idea of ending Negro slavery . . . For a while Mr. Wilberforce followed a life of wine, women, song, and idleness.

One day, however, he heard a Methodist preacher by the name of Whitfield and Whitfield changed his life.

"If Billy turns Methodist," said his mother, "I shall cut him off." Said Mr. Wilberforce to Pitt, "I laughed and sang and pursued gaiety and now I say to myself, 'What madness is all of this'." Pitt, the Prime Minister, tried to talk him out of becoming a Methodist, but gave up . . . Said Pitt, "If this is madness in Billy, I hope he will bite us all." It was an age of great pleasure . . . Wilberforce became a reformer . . . he went after the slave trade, "an issue worthy of his greatness" reads the inscription on his statue. The opposition was fierce . . . What won for Wilberforce was that he succeeded in making slavery a religious issue. Here Wilberforce s u c c e e d e d where Thomas Paine had failed. Paine made it a political issue. This usually produces complications. The issue is not clear cut. If you are against Paine on another issue, you do not follow him on the slave issue even though you yourself might share his views in this respect. Wilberforce did not leave a loophole. "You believe in Christianity? Now tell me how you can support the slave trade?" There was no ambiguity, no side issues and the only personality involved, he said, was the Founder of Christianity.

William Wilberforce never relaxed pressure for a single moment. A partial victory in 1807 and then right before his death in 1833 came final victory, the end of the slave trade in England and in all its colonies . . . He established the greatest of all moral principles, "The greatest trait of a man is to fight desperately especially for something which he himself does not need."

Harry Golden

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If the bud be blasted, the tree will bear no fruit. If the springing corn be cut down, there will be no harvest. So if the youth be ruined through a fault in their education, the community sustains a loss which cannot be repaired.

Jeremy Belknap

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Difficulties are God's errands and when we are sent upon them, we should esteem it a proof of God's confidence.

Henry Ward Beecher

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The world is infinitely cruel, but the world is also infinitely kind.

Walter Hines Page

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It is very difficult for a man or a boy having become familiar with the Scripture ever to get away from it. It haunts him like an old song. It becomes a part of the warp and woof of his life.

Woodrow Wilson

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A strong religious faith tends to make a man do what he thinks is right, regardless of his own welfare.

If he does what he thinks is right, then he is armored against the blows of circumstance.

Brooks Hays

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The eternal and immutable laws of justice and morality are paramount to all human legislation. The violation of those laws is certainly within the power, but it is not among the rights of nations.

John Quincy Adams

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Philosophy makes us wiser, but Christianity makes us better men.

Henry Fielding

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It is when we all play safe that we create a world of utmost insecurity.

Dag Hammarskjold

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To read the Bible is to meet revolutionary ideas about God. We encounter the revolution in such a story as the washing of the disciples' feet. Consider what John is saying. It is a moment of crisis for Jesus. The betrayal and cross are not far away. Moreover, God's will for human history is at stake, for 'all things' are in Christ's hands. Such a moment might well call for a coup d'etat. But no. Jesus does something which seems utterly incongruous and yet is filled with meaning. He takes a bowl, and a towel, and washes the disciples' feet. Gradually the meaning dawns upon the disciples and upon us. God appears in that which is humble and apparently weak. He walks among us like a menial servant. The whole sweep of God's power in creation and human events comes to a focus in this fact. This humble man: this is who and what God is. — Lewis S. Mudge in "The Servant Lord and His Servant People."

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A Christian Church cannot say, "We have the Truth," if it does not do the Truth. For Christian truth is truth that must be obeyed. It is truth that men cannot merely have as a possession, it must rather possess them as instruments, as servants. A Church, therefore, may call itself orthodox, but so far as allegiance to God and likeness to God are concerned, it may be utterly pagan.—John A. Mackay.

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Dr. Francis Thompson said, "We must have a God magnificent enough to dazzle us." The Lord's shining may appear differently to each person but it has one thing in common for everyone: it is beyond ordinary vision. It is easy to see the shining of the Lord when the sun shines and all goes according to our liking. It is not so easy when clouds are thick, but thinking of the clouds will bring the rain and the need of rain helps us to see the glory of God.—K. Aart Van Dam.

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The Bible sounds the warning cries of those who lost the treasure (of life). Esau sold the precious things of life so cheaply. Luke tells us about the rich man who, when it was too late, begged for one more chance to be a witness to others of the truth. Shall we not miss our treasure if we pass by on the other side when there are wounds to heal, fears to allay, burdens to lift, crosses to bear, and an invitation to follow Christ to be accepted?—Marion C. Flagg.